

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 08304 131350Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 DRC-01 RSC-01 /041 W

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R 131057Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1422

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8304

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, US

SUBJECT: GOWON VISIT AND USG-FMG RELATIONS

REF: LAGOS 8303

1. WHILE ARTICLE REPORTED REFTEL IS NOT FIRST CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON FAILURE GOWON MEET WITH PRESIDENT NIXON (SEE ALSO LAGOS 8158 AND 8229), IT IS BY FAR MOST VITRIOLIC TO DATE AND AS SUCH MOST POTENTIALLY DAMAGING TO OVERALL USG-FMG RELATIONS.

2. GOWON HIMSELF HAS BEEN QUITE RELAXED, BOTH IN NEW YORK AND IN LAGOS (SEE SEPTTEL ON LATTER), OVER FACT MEETING WITH PREISDENT COULD NOT BE ARRANGED. CLEARLY, HOWEVER, ARTICLES ARE BASED ON LEAKS FROM FMG HAWKS WHO TAKE QUITE DIFFERENT VIEW, AND SEE THIS AS OPPORTUNITY PUSH FMG TOWARD MORE HOSTILE STANCE VIS-A-VIS US.

3. GOWON AND HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES HAVE KEPT FMG ON RELATIVELY EVEN KEEL DESPITE SIMILAR PRESS BARRAGES IN PAST, SO WE SEE NO REASON TO EXPECT THAT CURRENT SPATE OF HOSTILE ARTICLES WILL PRODUCE ANY SIGNIFICATN SHIFT IN NIGERIAN POLICY. NEVERTHELESS, EACH SUCH ARTICLE ERODES IN SOME MEASURE GOOD WILL WE ENJOY HERE AND AT SAME TIME REDUCES IN SOME DEGREE GOWON'S FREEDOM OF MANEUVER, AND THUS NECESSARILY REPRESENTS SOURCE OF CONCERN.

REINHARDT

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## Message Attributes

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